

Episode 247: The One in a Million Seven of Nine

[Women at Warp theme]

Jarrah: Hi, and welcome to Women at Warp: A Star Trek Podcast. Join us on our 10-year mission to explore intersectional diversity in infinite combinations. My name is Jarrah. And thanks for tuning in. With me today is Kennedy.

Kennedy: Hello.

Jarrah: And we also have a super special guest, Anika.

Anika: Hi.

Jarrah: All right. So, before we get into our main topic, which is a big one, it's Seven of Nine spoilers.

We have actually an announcement to make first. So, it is with both pride and joy, and a little bit of sadness that I let you know that our podcast mission will be coming to an end after 10 years on March 31st, 2025. So, that's a little bit more than six months from now.

Our episodes will be released as regular until then. And Patreon hangouts, watchalongs and other rewards will be fulfilled. After our final episode, content will continue to be available for as long as we're able to make it. So, we have posted a statement on the website from our entire crew, so please check us out at womenatwarp.com to read more about this decision.

But we're really, really proud that we have almost made it to a 10-year mission. We're going to get there. Really just the types of themes we've addressed, the guests we've been able to profile, it's something that I'm really proud of, and I am really excited for the other episodes that we have left to come out for you in the run-up to March 31st.

Kennedy, do you want to add anything else?

Kennedy: I'm just too old. My eyeballs are sweating over here. I don't know why it's so warm in October. Yes, I do. Global warming. Yeah, like you said, Jarrah. I'm super proud of what we've been able to accomplish here. The people that we've been able to meet, the ideas we've been able to exchange and just getting to know all of you, lovely folks, has been-- [sighs] I don't want to cry. I don't want to cry. We're not going to do this, because there's no crying in the board, okay? [Jarrah laughs] We're not going to do this right now. But it's going to be fun. Six months is a long time to have a whole lot of fun. So, stay tuned. We're just super excited that all of you were able to take this ride with us.

Jarrah: Absolutely. So, for other housekeeping, I will let you know that our show is still made possible by our patrons on Patreon. We want to thank everyone who's been a patron from the very beginning on whether you've contributed once or been contributing repeatedly, but you've really kept us going. We will continue to be, as I said, producing patron rewards. And so, and we will need to continue to have some support for our closing costs and to ensure that we're keeping the content available for y'all.

So, if you'd like to support our show, you can do so for as little as a dollar a month. And you can do that at patreon.com/womenatwarp. That's P-A-T-R-E-O-N dotcom slash Women at Warp. We also still have podcast merch. So, you can check out our TeePublic store at teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp to get T-shirts, tote bags all that good stuff. So, I think that's it for our housekeeping today.

So, with that, I will turn the floor to our guest, Anika. This isn't your first time on the show. So, instead of asking you about your history of *Star Trek*, I'm going to ask you to tell us a bit about yourself, and what Seven of Nine means to you?

Anika: Okay. So, my name is Anika. I quite literally named myself after Seven of Nine. I started using the name Anika in the early 2000s, and legally changed it in 2015. So, I relate to the character of Seven of Nine almost more than any other character in fiction. She came to me at a time when I was really struggling and going through a bunch of stuff, and she gave me a way out of all of that. And so, when I got to the other side, I decided that was the name that that I wanted to be known by.

I relate specifically to her history of childhood trauma, to having a strange relationship with her parents and then also the “people” who raised her, being the Borg. And her desire to remain a collective entity while also figuring out her identity from her own perspective. I wrote a blog post about this that I can share with you all. I say that the Borg are depression. [chuckles] When I was going through a lot of emotional trauma, the idea of the Borg seems really beautiful and amazing to me. The concept of someone taking over my emotions, so that I didn't have to feel them anymore and I didn't have to make my own decisions, all of that would be taken care for me.

I wasn't suicidal. I just didn't want to be in charge of myself anymore. Then Seven gets thrown out of that. In order for me to be a healthy person, I also needed to be thrown out of that. I was able to claw back my own identity and build who I wanted to be outside of all the external forces who were trying to define me separately. I feel that that is Seven's journey, that the Borg tried to define her, her parents tried to define her, Janeway tries to define her. She figures out that she is a person all on her own and that she can decide for herself. And that I just think is a really beautiful, powerful journey.

Jarrah: Aww. That is very well said.

Kennedy: Holy smokes.

Jarrah: The eyeball sweating is expanding. [laughs]

Kennedy: I just wanted to talk about *Star Trek* on a Saturday afternoon, and here I am feeling the feels. I had never considered the Borg as an allegory for depression. But holy smokes, if that isn't it like, “Oh. Oh, oh my God.” Even to take it even a little bit further when people are like, “Oh, just feel better. Just think happy thoughts.” You cannot. You cannot happy thought your way out of the Borg. It's not how it works. There's a series of surgical procedures you may or may not. So, like. “Oh.” I'm sorry. This is super-- Oh. Mm.

Jarrah: Yeah. I think one of the things that's so powerful about Seven, is that there is so many ways in to relating with her. She was brought in-- We'll get into a bit of the whole Borg big marketing stuff. But one of the aspects they talked about is, we needed more of this Spock, Data, other character. These are other characters that have had folks that are othered in real life that see themselves in those characters. Seven, she has some of the comic moments of her finding her way, but it's also taking it very, very seriously.

So, we've also had a post on our blog about a person seeing themselves in Seven, and seeing the Borg as the cis world, and then finding themselves as a trans person with their own identity separate from these crushing conformist expectations. We've talked in other episodes of the show-- I'll just name them, because we may not get super into depth on all these themes today. But if you would like to listen to more of these themes, we have episode 161 on autism in *Trek*. A lot of folks relate to Seven as someone on potentially the autism spectrum or an allegory for that, particularly in her time on *Voyager*. Episode 203 *Aspec* in

nd Trek, which is a sexually romantic spectrum. Episode 209 on Bi/Pan Representation. We will talk a little bit more about Seven as a queer character.

So, there's so many ways into this character. I think her ability to just make people who feel alone, othered, marginalized-- Like, their identity is invalidated or they're struggling with that in different ways to make them feel seen is the most beautiful thing about this character.

Kennedy: Yeah, I agree. What I love most about the character at this point in my life is how she has forced me to confront certain perceptions and really decondition those perceptions of what femininity is worth. I know that seems really a broad thing, but-- We're all familiar. She was Borg Barbie. You either love Barbie or hate Barbie, there's really no middle ground. I feel like that evoked very powerful responses from people, because they hadn't come to terms with their own perceptions of "feminine worth" or whatever that means. But I know that initially, I was like, "What is this? What are we doing? Is this what we're doing now in *Star Trek*? Okay, cool."

And then, watching her arc, and seeing how fragile she was and how misused-- When I say misused, I mean by the Borg and sometimes by Janeway. She got a little like-- Well, we'll circle back to that, I'm sure. The more and more I thought about it, the whole Borg Barbie thing really stuck, because it's like, everybody either loves Barbie or hates Barbie. The girls who love Barbie get Barbie. But when they're done with them, if they're played with, they just cast them aside.

When I say Seven as a Borg Barbie and a feminist icon, people will either lean into that and appreciate it for all its complexities and nuances, or it'll trigger something deep within them and then they'll criticize it in whatever way. Unfortunately, I was one of the latter people until I stopped and looked at myself and was like, "Hold on, these are your own insecurities shouting here. Maybe take a step back." Because at the end of the day, Anika couldn't help what she looked like. Those are her genes. That's her face. That's her body. So, what? Get over it.

It's not her fault. She can't change any of that. Literally, she was cybernetic for most of her life. Can't change any of that. It was one of the first things to really force me to stop assigning women with this aesthetic responsibility, and instead look inside and look at the whole picture at the very least.

Anika: My problem with the Borg Barbie thing is is that stereotype thing. It's the people who haven't even watched the show, who only know of her that way and they make assumptions based on-- Oh, she was just brought in as sex appeal. There was nothing behind that.

Regardless of what decisions were made behind the scenes, Seven's arc is very powerful, and it has nothing to do with how she looks or her breast size. This was pointed out to me once. It was the 25th anniversary of *Voyager*, so whenever that was. Or, 20th, I don't know. It was pointed out to me, and I realized that even I bought into the ideas of Seven as just a body, because after that first introduction of de-Borgified Seven, where it sweeps up her body, and she's in the silver suit and there's soft lighting and literal spotlights, and it's just completely ridiculous. But after that, the camera doesn't linger on her body in that way. It's contrasted very differently from the way the camera treats to T' Pol.

Kennedy: Oh. Yeah.

Jarrah: yeah.

Anika: Or, really everyone in *Enterprise*. [chuckles] That was pointed out to me. I started watching the camera angles. The way that she was lit and the way that even her costumes,

as they changed, they never stopped being skin tight, but they did become softer. It was interesting that we have this idea in our mind of like, "Oh, she was always over sexualized." But it's not actually true on a day-to-day basis.

Kennedy: Yeah. I almost feel like in the way that "conservative right wing" jerk faces just make any accusation, and it's usually just like an admission. That's how I feel that Seven acts in the overall arc of *Trek* in general, but also in this cast particularly, because if you're still focusing on what she looks like-- You think she's cute. It's not because the show is highlighting her anymore.

I'm glad you brought that up, Anika, because I noticed that as well. Like, yeah, her stuff got a whole lot softer. She wasn't the focal point. And especially, when we had more and more episodes where she was, we got to see her perception of herself, like, her mind's eye, she was always in a uniform. People who always react that way to her-- It's okay if you think she's attractive. It's all right.

Anika: She is.

Kennedy: It's okay. There's nothing wrong with that, because newsflash, women can be attractive and brilliant too. I know that's difficult for a lot of people to accept somehow still in our year of [unintelligible [00:15:13] 2024 in case.

All of this talk about her physicality reminds me of what my sisters are going through in their workplaces. They're both teachers. They're both tall. They're both gorgeous and curvy and are constantly getting in trouble for wearing clothes, [laughs] you know what I mean, because of how they're shaped. They're like, "Oh, this is inappropriate. And it's like, how it's past my knees. My shoulders are covered. My elbows are covered. What are you talking about?"

Jarrah: Totally. I think, yeah, I was also in the same situation as you, Kennedy, where I was like a baby feminist and from that aspect of feminist at that era was very much that era of the beauty myth and stuff. And it's like, "Stop objectifying women." I think that we can also recognize that Brannon Braga and Rick Berman maybe not the most fun for women to work with.

There's a lot of stories about their interactions, particularly Brannon's interactions with women on the show. We know that they did have this marketing plan in mind, but that doesn't mean that Seven wasn't so much more than that. And ultimately, Brannon Braga wrote a lot of the content for her too. So, I will give him a shoutout for that. Him and Berman had this idea, but they didn't just leave it there.

So, the two things can exist simultaneously that, yeah, the creators did have a male gazey marketing plan in mind at the beginning, but Seven had so much more depth. Jeri Ryan brought so much more to the role. And then, especially, when we get to *Picard*, she's a fully formed. Very, very nuanced character.

I think that the episodes that I'm less comfortable with in Seven's arc, excluding *Retrospect*, which we're just going to pretend didn't happen for the sake of this discussion. But if we did do a deep dive on the episode *Retrospect*, which is 104, if you want to go, listen.

So, originally, Seven of Nine, her name was inspired by the voluptuous female Android portraying by Julie Newmar in the short lived 1960s sitcom *My Living Doll*. *My Living Doll* was inspired by the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea. There's definitely elements of that in *Voyager*, especially in terms of The Doctor's crush on her, where he's like, "I am coaching you in all things social." And then, "Oh, hey, I'm also in love with you."

Kennedy: Gross.

Jarrah: So, those storylines gross me out a little bit. But again, that doesn't mean that Seven isn't a good character. Those areas where I'm like, "Oh, It's a little--" I don't know. There's a lot of allusions to mythology in *Star Trek*, and sometimes they're a little problematic.

Anika: Yeah. *Voyager* is my favorite of the *Star Trek* series, and it is extremely flawed. There are many, many things wrong with it, but that doesn't take away the good things. Even the terrible things, I can find something beautiful in them and that extends to Seven as well. Honestly, same with *Picard*, which is also my favorite and extremely flawed.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. Okay. So, we have *Voyager*. She has a lot of key relationships with different characters. But is there a particular *Voyager* episode, Anika, that you want to highlight in terms of Seven's experience that you find particularly meaningful?

Anika: Well, honestly, it's more her whole arc that is meaningful to me. I will say *The Raven* is very special to me, because it's the beginning of her building her own identity separate from anyone else. It's because she starts to have memories of her past, and that is where she can build things on. She realizes that she was a little girl once, and she had parents and things were taken away from her. And that continues as she goes on into *Dark Frontier*, which I think I've even spoken about *Dark Frontier* on this podcast before.

It is a very powerful story for me, because we get Seven's history and we get Seven asserting herself to her two moms, Janeway and the Borg Queen. I sometimes describe it as the *Divorce Court* episode of Seven's arc and *Voyager*, because she has to go defend herself against, both Janeway and the Borg Queen, and assert that she gets to choose and she chooses *Voyager*.

So, the episodes that are about her past are where I start, because again, it's building an identity and getting to a place where you want to be. But as far as relationships, I love her relationship with Naomi. I think that it's very powerful, because Seven is both a child and an adult, and that's an interesting idea to see.

I think that Naomi, she is also weird and special and comes across as neurodivergent in her own way. Watching the two of them interact, it's like this little fun part of *Voyager*, where you can imagine what if the series was just from their perspective. [chuckles] It would be a completely different storyline. So, that relationship has always been really important to me. So, her relationships with both Janeway and the Borg Queen and Naomi are those are my little triangle of *Voyager* important relationships. But also, he's missing from your list here, but Tuvok.

Jarrah: Oh, yes.

Anika: That starts in *The Raven* for me, when Tuvok is the one who finds her and helps her. He understands her, I think, better than a lot of people on *Voyager* who just really, really want her to be human. I think he relates to that too, because they're really trying to make him human too, and he's like, "It's okay. You don't have to be human. You just have to be Seven."

Jarrah: Yes. Just allusion back to our episode on *Anglo-American Empire* in *Star Trek* and they are like, who's the real assimilators here, The Federation or the Borg? Tuvok, also in Seven, in "Year of Hell". Oh, just a beautiful moment, and I really wish that we would have seen more of their relationship. Kennedy, do you have a *Voyager* episode or relationship you want to highlight?

Kennedy: I want to just double down on the relationship she had with Janeway. It's so interesting how *Voyager* is like most *Trek*, the gift that keeps on giving where when you go back and watch certain episodes at different points in your life, you're like, "Oh, I didn't even notice that before."

I always thought coming up and watching it when it was on the air, it was a very teacher-student, mentor-mentee relationship there. But getting older and seeing-- I don't know, I just always felt there was subtext. Yes, Janeway was getting older and looking at Seven of Nine makes me super protective of her and critical of how everyone else on that ship handled her.

So, Tuvok, like you were saying, Anika, probably the best one out of the lot, but The Doctor and Janeway, I feel like both had some grooming moments in them.

Jarrah: And Chakotay. I'll be on it.

Kennedy: Yeah. Chakotay, at least, had the good sense to wait until she had figured herself out a little bit more. But it's still a power dynamic thing like, "You're second in command. You're XO. What am I going to tell you? No? We're on this boat together indefinitely." I'll tell you no and make it awkward for the next 16 years it takes to get back or however long it took them.

I just feel like in the moment watching those characters, it's like, "Okay, these folks really want to help her. They really want to help her define herself and fold into the hierarchy, the chain of command," all that stuff. But it's like, "Mm, no, they were really just grooming her, so that they would be able to control her in ways that they saw fit," because at some level, even though she wasn't Borg anymore, they still perceived her as a threat.

Jarrah: Yeah, she makes them uncomfortable. And so, I think there is some of it where you can definitely argue that and probably, if you ask later, Seven was that in your interest to have these social lessons and things like that, probably. But it's the power dynamic that makes it really uncomfortable. This is your doctor, this is your captain and your first officer, who with apologies to the J Seven and the C Seven shippers.

The challenge that I have with that is in her early episodes, the way that they talk about her is very much as parents. I think Brannon Braga talked about it as the child raised by wolves, kind of thing. So, they see her as this child in an adult body, and they treat her like a child and then it gets gross when it gets to be like, "Oh, and now I'm your best friend and now I'm your boyfriend." Yeah.

Kennedy: Not just gross and squeamish in those ways with Chakotay and The Doctor. But back to Janeway specifically, I don't remember the episode itself and I can't for the life of me feel bad, remember the context, but Seven had been sent to her room, so she's chilling in a cargo bay, okay? She's living in a cargo bay. Plugged into the wall, she does what she's told, she's in the wall, regenerating.

Janeway comes to her-- Not just comes to her room, comes to her bed and pulls her out of it and is like, "Hey, you were wrong for x, y and z reasons, and that's why you can't leave your room now." Like, "What?" That's a level of, mm, psychological manipulation that is extremely sinister, I feel like.

I also feel that, because she was wearing a Starfleet uniform and because of their situation, no one really doubled down and thought about it. Every time I see that-- And Seven just looks at her like, "Okay, do you feel better now that you've flexed on me? Can I go plug back in please? Thanks." It just reminded me of situations that were interpersonal relationships

can be abusive. Even though it's not an outwardly physical thing, that type of emotional and mental manipulation, or at least the attempt to do it, I think, is would be one of the few black streaks, I guess, on Janeway's record, as far as I was concerned.

Anika: Yeah. I've been having these conversations recently about, in terms of prodigy, how Janeway isn't actually great with kids.

Jarrah: [laughs]

Anika: She's good as a teacher and a mentor, maybe, and as a captain, but people want to put her into a mommy box, and it's really not.

Jarrah and Kennedy: Mm-hmm

Anika: She's awkward. I think that comes out with Seven [audio cut], in that she is treating her like a kid and then also an officer at the same time. Seven never really has a rank. She's put in astrometrics, but that's not actually her job. It's just like, "You are good at this, so go do it." But it's not like, she gets a commission or anything.

Janeway is a people collector. She collects people throughout this [audio cut] She wants them all to conform to the way that they should be-- She respects their autonomy and agency, but she also expects them to choose her way, because she's convinced that her way is correcting good, and moral and the best.

Kennedy: I was going to say, she respects people's autonomy because she's supposed to, not because it's a core feature. Listening to what you were saying, Anika, made me think like, Janeway tried to treat Seven like Kes. Kes was that perfect mid ground for her where it's like, "I'm young, but I'm still an adult, but I'm also new, so show me the way."

There was great affection between Janeway and Kes. I feel like part of Janeway tried to, I guess, mimic some type of resemblance of that relationship with Seven and was not getting that. No, she was a preteen. Seven's an adult. [chuckles] In terms of experience and worldliness, not necessarily of age, but you can't expect to get undying gratitude from somebody who doesn't know what gratitude is conceptually.

Jarrah: And who didn't have a choice. Kes had a choice to come there while she was two years old. You can debate her ability to consent, but she ultimately had a choice to stay on her planet or to leave with them. She immediately seized on Janeway as a mentor mother figure and desired to cultivate that relationship. And Seven never had the choice.

Actually, I'm amazed at how much I did not expect this to make me think so much of the *Anglo-American Empire* episode. The whole Janeway and Picard, particularly as captains, are just so convinced of their own moral superiority, because they are the embodiment of Starfleet and they're convinced of Starfleet's moral superiority. And so, it's like, well, of course, this former Borg would want to be liberated and would want to be human and that I'm just doing what's best for her and never thinks to maybe that I didn't do this right. But it's not a Janeway episode. [chuckles] So, I'm going to maybe segue us a little bit.

Actually, I'm interested. Is there anything more folks want to highlight about *Voyager* before we turn to *Picard*? Because I think this could be a good segue into where is Seven when we start in *Picard*, and why is she no longer with Starfleet?

Anika: I will say that, shoutout to the seven-season episode *Imperfection*, because I think it's a really beautiful seven-- It's a really good beginning of the end of that introductory arc of

Seven. So, it's beautiful and it makes me cry, even though I've seen it 20 times. But other than that, we could move on. [chuckles]

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I'll also just say that I just rewatched *One* and was really struck by how good/triggering that episode is as a representation of anxiety and panic, where she's alone and she has these hallucination manifestations of Borg and her crewmates that are telling her everything that she thinks is wrong about herself. So, yeah, holy crap. That's another one where you can see early on that that is not an episode where she's sexualized at all. It's really about her psychological development.

Okay. So, we're just talking about some of the problematic aspects. I still think they're ultimately portraying it as this is her family, this is positive. But by the time we get to *Picard*, she's no longer in Starfleet. So, what were your thoughts on where we see Seven when we pick up with *Picard* when she's with the Fenris Rangers.

Anika: He's so angry. [chuckles] So, to go back to the personal side of this for me, I was ready to meet up with Seven again and realize that she could still teach me lessons. I'm in my 40s now, and I've reached the part of my life where I'm absolutely over anyone telling me who to be, or how to be or to be quiet. I definitely have a lot of reasons to be angry. I feel like waves hands at the world.

So, she gave me permission to be angry in a way and also allowed me to reflect on why I was feeling those feelings, so that I could actually move past them as well, which I think is her main-- Seven goes through a lot in *Picard*. Each season is different in a way, but certainly in that first one, it's about realizing that she's isolated herself and that she is only allowing herself to feel anger and realizing that she actually wants to spend time with people again and finding a new family, sort of rebuilding what she lost when Voyager returned and Starfleet was like, "Absolutely not, we reject you." [laughs]

Jarrah: Which is it's real rich given some of the other folks that they've just let into Starfleet or Starfleet adjacent things like Gillian Taylor.

[laughter]

Jarrah: It's like, "Ooh, you came back in a portal with Kirk? Sure, you get to be at this hearing now and you're just at the Federation council and you have like a role as a Starfleet scientist." Like, Seven was sacrificing herself for the sake of the crew. She was performing really important work over the course of years, and they're just like, "Mm, but Borg though." And you're like, "Do you remember Picard also was Borg once?"

Anika: Well, it's a story of privilege, and Picard is allowed.

Kennedy: Yeah, because he was in Starfleet when he was assimilated. It's not the same. Even though her parents were in a Starfleet vessel on a Starfleet mission, it's not the same.

Jarrah: Yeah. Janeway can get Dao into Starfleet, but not Seven. Not that I'm saying that letting in Dao was wrong, but just the standards are real weird. Oh, my gosh, Season 1 of *Picard*, the whole thing with Icheb's graphic death, and that whole trauma, I was not necessarily a fan of. I don't feel like I needed to see the anger more justified, but it certainly did. Yeah, it's really hard to watch some of the stuff that she goes through in this era of *Star Trek* where it's even more in your face.

Anika: Yeah.

Kennedy: Yeah. Sorry. Go ahead, Anika.

Anika: No, no. Go ahead. It's fine.

Kennedy: No. Please, because I'm blanking on most of *Picard*, because *Picard*, I watched all of it and somehow don't remember a lick of it, [chuckles] except for key moments, one of them being Seven plugging in to that cube, and me leaping out of my chair thinking that she was about to pop the fuck off, pardon my Klingon. And it didn't happen. So, the fact that that didn't happen, it was presented to me something I didn't even know that I wanted or needed in my soul and then ripped away from me so quickly, I was like, "I can't. This is abuse."

Anika: Oh, no. Okay, so that's my favorite episode.

Jarrah: It's so good. That's my favorite moment in that season, for sure.

Kennedy: That's one of my favorite moments in that series.

Anika: Series. Absolutely. *Broken Pieces*, from beginning to end is my favorite episode. I love it so much. Okay. So, [chuckles] I agree with you that you want to see her go full queen and get her revenge in some ways. I actually, really expected that in the end of the third season, and I feel like I was tricked. [chuckles] It's not fair.

Kennedy: All of us were hoodwinked, bamboozled, led astray.

Anika: But also, when she succeeds at taking over and fighting back through being the queen, and then looks over at Elnor and he's like, "So, are you going to assimilate me now?" He's really scared, even though she's his favorite person. And she says, "Anika has more work to do." And I was just like, "Oh, I literally repeat that weekly." [Kennedy laughs] That's my new mantra in life, is Anika has more work to do.

Whenever I feel like I can't anymore, like, I can't deal with the election, for example, it's like, "No, I make some more calls." It gives me that sense of power that I am not working just for myself. I am working for the collective community.

Obviously, the Borg are the bad guys, but my favorite parts of *Picard* in the first season and even in the third season with Jack are the parts where they point out that there's good in collecting, and then actually being a rugged individualist who only has to care themselves and the people that they care about that that's not actually how a good functioning society works. I really like those thorny parts of *Picard* where it's like, let's think about what we can learn from the Borg and do it the good way and the not authoritarian way.

Jarrah: Mm. That's such a good point. I love that using that quote as a mantra. I want to talk a little bit about be gay do crime, Seven and Raffi tag team in Season 2, which is my favorite part of Season 2. Basically, the seven parts are my favorite parts of *Picard*, starting with, man, that the sweater, jeans, leather jacket situation looks like a great choice for you.

Going through the be gay do crimes, I'm now having some second thoughts about how I feel about Season 3 stuff. But yeah, let's talk about Season 2 a bit and her relationship with Raffi. I will say one of the things I think was the best choice Picard made was just forget that she even had a thing with Chakotay. But it's also good that she's canonically bi or pan now.

Anika: Her relationship with Raffi is important, I think. I don't know that it's done. I feel like we should thank the two women who acted it more than the series. But it's important that it exists, because I think that of all of the new series, *Picard* is the most straight-laced and nostalgic and like-- Yes, 90s people here, you can still have this.

Jarrah: It's patriarchal.

Anika: Yes, that's a great word for it. [laughs]

Jarrah: Patriarchal. So, patriarchal. [laughs]

Anika: I love Raffi. She's super, super important to me as well. As a character, she's just amazing. And Michelle Hurd, I've loved since *SVU* Season 1. [laughs] So, I will always have to shoutout "Justice for Jeffries." We should support Michelle Hurd in every single thing she ever does.

Jarrah: I also have a soft spot in my heart for just those narratives of the two damaged women come together and help each other see the best in themselves. It ties in with Seven's whole thing in Season 2, where she no longer looks like a Borg. She's grappling with the feeling of freedom of just being able to pass as human, and not having people always look at her funny and reconciling with the way that she's grown through her trauma, even though the trauma itself was appalling. It's a really, I think, again a powerful character exploration throughout that season.

Kennedy: Yeah, it really should have been called Seven of Nine, [Jarrah chuckles] because what is happening. I will say that as much as I love Raffi and Seven together, and the two actors who made them so. I always felt that them getting together at Raffi's point in her recovery was really reckless and a little trauma bondy. And by a little, I mean a lot.

Jarrah: Oh, for sure.

Kennedy: So, when people were annoyed that they weren't together anymore in Season 3, and I was like, "No, that was never meant to last." As great as they are and as much as I hope that they circle back around to it. And maybe try again. Raffi was struggling with addiction and cornering her substance abuse issues. She was dealing with family stuff, estrangement, poverty from the looks of it, which I don't know how that happens in a post capitalist society, but there she was living in the desert.

Jarrah: Privilege. Well, and she needed an enlightened Worf mentor. [chuckles] Yeah, the thing that annoyed me about it wasn't the fact that those characters had a challenge. It's like that they didn't elucidate the reason they weren't together at all. And so, it just felt very much like, "Oh, this is going to be the reunion season, so we should go back to people being more straight."

Kennedy: Mm-hmm. I felt that too.

Jarrah: And so, the thing that I'm saying-- I'm rethinking now about Season 3, because I think the journey they took us on was Seven-- So, they have this whole thing about how she wasn't allowed back in Starfleet, then she was but like--

Anika: Starfleet command hates her. That's what I got out of it.

Jarrah: Well, and then she has to work under this guy who is deadnaming her constantly, which is an interesting trans allegory as well. She's constantly doubting herself, because Starfleet has essentially conditioned her that they're never going to accept her. There's nothing that she can really do to be good enough. She's still angry.

And then, the victory at the end is she's won their acceptance, and she gets to be the captain. I'm wondering like, "Is that a hollow victory?" Because I was also very much like, "I'm here for Captain Seven. She totally deserves this." I think that's true. It's like, "Oh, you

successfully assimilated.” I know it's not saying that exactly, because you do have Shaw and folks realize, “Oh, I misjudged you a bit,” but it still is an assimilation when she's been rejected by these people for so long, and then it's like, “Oh, no, you've shown you are one of us.”

Kennedy: Yeah. Seven getting the captaincy again and getting back into Starfleet-- I'm glad you even brought it up this way, Jarrah. Really reminded me of just my experience as a black woman in this country, and fighting tooth and nail to be recognized in a space for a multitude of reasons, and then being denied from that space for a multitude of bullshit reasons, and then when you've unequivocally distinguished yourself from everybody else, “Oh, well, cool. Yeah, you can totally come here now. Yeah, we've got an office for you and everything.” And it's like, “Well, do I even want to sit at this table now? Do I want to eat this food that you all said that I wasn't good enough to try?” Like, maybe. All that is empty and hollow. It's like, going back into office after the quarantine.

Everyone was talking Black Lives Matter, and acceptance from marginalized peoples, and we see you, we hear you, we love you. And then, we get back into the office and get treated the same way, like it was in one ear and out the other. It's just like without a commitment to changing biases within these structures, systems, Starfleet command, what have you, then what is the point? Is it intersectional diversity or is it assimilation?

Unless Starfleet has an XB committee on how to address, navigate, facilitate for people who have survived assimilation, what's the point? Because all this does is set her up to deal with more brass and have more responsibility with less support as usual. So, yes. Hell, yeah. Seven in the captain's chair, but also, who's on the board to make sure that people like her don't get abused in that position of power.

Jarrah: Yup. And it's not just like a token appointment that they're not going to be like, “Look, it's our first export captain.” Actually, no, second. [laughs]

Kennedy: Right. It's our first female captain. Could you die?

Anika: And conveniently, half of our fleet just got murdered. So, there was a lot of openings. I don't know. What's your thoughts on it, Anika?

Anika: Well, so what I will say, is that I think that the taken that is the most patriarchal, and it is the most, like you said, the reunion and look at all the boomers saving us. It's important, again, for-- The visuals of Seven being the captain and specifically Seven being the captain of the *Enterprise*, it's important for us to see that and for us to see her with Raffi also right beside her, and to see two women who have struggled, who have gone through that addiction, and mental illnesses and whatever you want to put one or the other and to see them “respected” by Starfleet.

But I also agree that they're being set up to fail, and that if we don't actually ever get anything more for these characters, then-- Personally, I prefer the ending of Season 1 much more of the people who are working outside of Starfleet doing things that Starfleet can't do. Like, Beverly Crusher did this as well. She ends up back in Starfleet.

Kennedy: Oh, [unintelligible [00:47:44]]

Anika: Everyone ends up in Starfleet at the end of Starfleet Picard. It bothers me in a lot of ways, because I really want to believe in that like, you can do good and not be in Starfleet. Sometimes you can do better than Starfleet.

Kennedy: Perish the thought, better than Starfleet. Woo. This reminds me of that Vince McMahon documentary that's on Netflix now, and how he appropriated slowly all of the wrestling federations, including WCW, and how it's like, people were always worried about burning their bridges with events and storming off when they had the justifiable reasons to do so, when in reality, he's the type of dude where you storming off and standing up for yourself makes him respect you even more and he'll try to hire you back. It's like that kind of thing. It's like, "Oh, wow, you sure told me. I really like the cut of your jib. Why don't you put these pips back on?" It's like, "Ah, I don't know, it's a little sinister. It's a little insidious" is so I'm saying.

Jarrah: Yeah. That makes me think about how I believe it was Season 1 or Season 2, probably Season 1 where folks started talking about a Fenris Ranger spin off. I so would have been there for that. I have mixed feelings about the *Star Trek: Legacy* idea, mostly because of nepotism and Jack Crusher, and because of what we've just been talking about.

Yeah, I love these characters and the representation is super important. I just have this deep ambivalence about Starfleet and whether there needs to-- because Picard kept doing this right where Season 1, at the beginning, they're setting up that Starfleet's got some major problems. And then, at the end, it's like, "Oh, actually, they're fine. It was just like a couple bad Romulans."

They keep doing this where they're exposing these systemic problems in Starfleet, but then wrapping it up in a way that is supposed to ease the tension. And so, in *Picard*, it just gives me this big ambivalence about Starfleet and whether this is a place for these characters that I love so much.

Kennedy: Yeah. In a way, it totally plays into what *Discovery* was talking about in Season 3. I feel that *Picard* and *Discovery* do a great job of having their own independent stories, but also cementing things in canon. Qowat Milat, for example.

But to your point of really calling into question, the ideals, and the morals of an organization and watching how they react on the heels of that questioning is a big deal. I think it's interesting that in a discussion about Seven of Nine, we're like, "Well, maybe some [audio cut] Isn't that cool? You should revisit this."

Jarrah: [laughs] Yeah. If you got to either produce the next iteration of whatever *Star Trek* featuring Seven of Nine, or if you got to create something in the *Voyager*, *Picard* era that already exists that we didn't see with Seven, what would you want to see?

Anika: It can't happen because of the way *Picard* ended. But I really, honestly, would like the Seven Captain of Serena with Soji and Elnor and Raffi, and honestly, also Jack Crusher.

Jarrah: Yeah. Sure. Okay.

Anika: I love Jack Crusher, and he belongs on that crew way more than he belongs in Starfleet. I would watch that show. I would write that show like [audio cut] I'm tired of, here's the *Enterprise* crew doing *Enterprise* crew things. I want to see new stories.

I think that the *La Sirena* show would be more valuable in-- We already have *Strange New Worlds* and Starfleet Academy to build back the Legends of Starfleet and explore those stories. I think that we need the *Deep Space Nine* of this era. I want to see those people. I want to see the people who don't fit into Starfleet, but who still do good and who can go and do things that Starfleet can't.

I think that it's a real missed opportunity with the way that *Picard* ends. I would much rather see *Star Trek La Sirena* than *Star Trek: Legacy*. I just want to see those characters. I love all of the new characters made up for *Star Trek: Picard*. I think it was nice for them to give us a sendoff to the other characters. I think they did really well by everybody.

Everybody got something exciting to do, and that now we can put them aside [chuckles] and we can focus on the new people. I think that Seven, because she was the new person on *Voyager*, is a more interesting *Legacy* character to bring in and surround with all of the new people and go be gay do crimes.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

[laughter]

Kennedy: I want to first say that I in no way, shape or form endorse Vince McMahon-

[laughter]

Kennedy: -using that documentary as a reference. Okay. Thank you.

Jarrah: I think it was implied.

Kennedy: You never know. I just want to be clear. Let me take it out of context. If I had my way Seven of Nine's character, I would put her in *Section 31*.

Jarrah: Mm. Interesting.

Kennedy: Because if you're really going to be-- Not necessarily the *Section 31* film, not that project, but just the entity in and of itself, because she's always been so very critical of, not only command structures but Starfleet itself. I think if you want your highest critic to be the one that keeps you in check, how Sisko made Odo the umpire and take us out to the holosuite. He knew that Odo was going to be impartial, even though they were cool.

I feel like Seven being in *Section 31* or on some type of advisory board specifically not necessarily in the field, would do Starfleet and the rest of the populace in the galaxy I feel a great service, because she would ensure that people don't get too big for their britches, because she knows what it's like to be robbed of her ability to choose at various points in her life.

I feel like everything that happened to *Picard* would equip her to better suited in *Section 31* than on the *Enterprise*. Because like Anika said, I'm tired of the *Enterprise*. We get it. We get it. We get it. It's the yacht. That's cool. But pirates like yachts too. [Anika laughs]

Jarrah: I think that's interesting, because *Section 31* is set up so much as the antithesis to. And I'm going to say "human rights" even though-- [unintelligible [00:55:12]] would call me out for that, but they're the ones that are really pushing heavy restrictive security things in *Deep Space Nine*.

Maybe she converts, or maybe she's key to a reform at *Section 31* or maybe Starfleet has their-- Sorry, there isn't a better word for human rights that they give us in *Star Trek*, sentient beings rights, like watchdog organization or something that actually has some power to advance things and change the system, I think that could be cool.

Kennedy: I just always perceive *Section 31* to not only be the ones who operate outside of what Starfleet considers to be the right thing, but also as an entity that self corrects, so that

whatever power they wield for Starfleet can also be wielded against Starfleet, because they're impartial.

Anika: I love that interpretation of *Section 31*. I want to see more of *Section 31*. I'm actually really excited that they're finally doing something with it, because I think that is the perception, Jarrah, but I think it could be more like what Kennedy [chuckles] is talking about. I always like the old series with Peta Wilson, *La Femme Nikita*. There are other versions of the Nikita story, but that's the one that I'm specifically talking about. That's what I want *Section 31* to be like. And so, I like the idea of Seven being the Nikita.

Jarrah: Yeah. I was going to say that I don't have a really specific concept, but I would like to in whatever way Seven makes it back to see just more moments interspersed of happiness in her life and on her terms. Not just happiness, because she got a promotion or she finally felt like she fit into this Starfleet machine, but those small moments with people that she cares about, I think that is something that I would hope, while it's valuable and valid, to continue to see her overcoming struggles. I also want to see her get more happiness and joy.

Kennedy: Yeah. Because she deserves it.

Anika: Absolutely.

Jarrah: All right. So, I think we're going to have to wrap it up. Is there anything last minute anyone really wants to squeeze in?

Kennedy: Once again, I do not endorse Vince McMahon at all.

[laughter]

Kennedy: I just wanted to cite the reference. Thank you.

Jarrah: My disclaimer is that, no matter who you ship Seven with, it is valid. Just ignore my take on the particular ships, if that is your thing. Okay. So, that's about all the time we have for today. Anika, where can people find you on the internet?

Anika: You can find me @pixiedane on Instagram. You can find me @pixiedane, I think. I think it might just be pixie, Bluesky. I will share with you my link tree. I have a website, *manicpixiedust.com*. And I have a *Star Trek* podcast, Antimatter Pod, which is at *antimatterpod.com*. So, I'm all over the internet. But it used to be easy. It used to be like, "This is my Twitter," and that doesn't work anymore.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, we will post your link tree in our show notes. So, check it out. Antimatter Pod is great. And Kennedy, where can people find you on the internet?

Kennedy: You can email me at kennedy@womenatwarp.com.

Jarrah: And I'm Jarrah, and you can find me at trekkiefeminist.com.

To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit womenatwarp.com, email us at crewomenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook or Instagram @womenatwarp. Thanks so much for listening.

[Women at Warp theme]

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